



NRC NEWS

U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC STAFF TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS AUGMENTED INSPECTION OF SCHLUMBERGER TECHNOLOGY CORPORATION

Officials of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission will meet with Schlumberger Technology Corporation officials in Houston, TX, on April 28 to discuss the results of the NRC's review of the exposure of oilfield workers to radiation in excess of NRC limits.

The meeting between the NRC and Schlumberger of Sugarland, TX, will begin at 1:00 p.m. at the Embassy Suites, 9090 Southwest Freeway, and is open to public observation. NRC officials will be available after the meeting to answer questions from the public.

The incident occurred on a temporary job site near Havre, Montana, on May 21, 2002 when a worker failed to properly transfer a radioactive source to its storage container after removing it from a well-logging device. These devices use radioactive material to obtain information about underground rock formations and the likely presence and amounts of gas or oil. As a result of human error, the radioactive source lay on the drill rig floor for about 56 hours. During this period, some oilfield workers were exposed to radiation. None of the individuals are expected to suffer any adverse health effects from the occurrence. NRC exposure limits for radiation workers are 50 times greater than for members of the public.

NRC was notified by Schlumberger of the incident on May 25 and dispatched a reactive inspection team to the site to determine the details of the incident. An Augmented Inspection was ordered following initial tests on one worker that suggested he may have received an unusually high dose of radiation.

The NRC's Augmented Inspection was conducted between September 24, 2002 and April 28, 2003. It included a thorough review of the sequence of events and the company's response, evaluation and corrective actions. The NRC's final inspection report will be available to the public about 30 days after the meeting.

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